

Please cancel claims 1 and 3-24 without prejudice.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (cancelled)

2. (cancelled)

3-24. (cancelled)

25. (new) A rinsing system comprising:

a first container;

a light emitting unit disposed inside said first container, for emitting ultraviolet rays;

a second container disposed inside said first container and being arranged so that said light emitting unit is placed outside said second container, said second container further being adapted to accommodate therein an article to be rinsed and also to enable irradiation the article with ultraviolet rays from said light emitting unit, said second container having a clearance through the first container; and

first gas supplying means configured to introduce a rinsing gas into said second container to maintain an ambience of said second container which ambience is different from that of said first container and also to keep an internal pressure higher than that of said first container.

26. (new) A rinsing system according to Claim 25, wherein the article is a light transmission type optional element.

27. (new) A rinsing system according to Claim 25, wherein the article is made of one of quartz and fluorite, and wherein the article is an optical element adapted to be used in a wavelength region of 200 nm or shorter.
28. (new) A rinsing system according to Claim 25, wherein the rinsing gas is an oxygen gas.
29. (new) A rinsing system according to Claim 25, further comprising second gas supplying means configured to introduce a nitrogen gas into said second container, and exhausting means configured to exhaust a gas in said first container.
30. (new) A rinsing method comprising:
- a first step for accommodating an article, to be rinsed, into a second container which is disposed inside a first container;
 - a second step for introducing a rinsing gas into the second container; and
 - a third step for irradiating the article with ultraviolet rays from a light source disposed inside the first container but outside the second container,
- wherein the second container has a clearance through the first container, and wherein the rinsing gas is introduced into the second container to maintain an ambience of the second container which ambience is different from that of the first container and also to keep an internal pressure higher than that of the first container.
31. (new) A rinsing method according to Claim 30, wherein the article is a light transmission type optional element.
32. (new) A rinsing method according to Claim 30, wherein the article is made of one of quartz and fluorite, and wherein the article is an optical element adapted to be used in a wavelength region of 200 nm or shorter.

33. (new) A rinsing method according to Claim 30, wherein the rinsing gas is an oxygen gas.
34. (new) A rinsing method comprising:
- a first step for accommodating an article, to be rinsed, into a second container which is disposed inside a first container;
 - a second step for introducing a rinsing gas into the second container;
 - a third step for irradiating the article with ultraviolet rays from a light source disposed inside the first container but outside the second container; and
 - a fourth step for introducing a nitrogen gas into the second container.
35. (new) A rinsing method according to Claim 34, wherein the second container has a clearance through the first container, wherein the second container is maintained at an ambience different from that of the first container and is kept at an internal pressure higher than that of the first container in the second step, and wherein the rinsing gas in the second container is discharged into the first container through the clearance while a gas in the first container is exhausted at the fourth step.